(b) whether it is a fact that current rubber cess of £ be Rs. 500 is proposed to £, raised to Rs. 2000 per tonne;

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(d) what is the current market price of natural rubber per tonne in India together with its international price;

(e) what is the total production of natural rubber in India and in other major rubber producing countries; and

(f) whether it is a fact that rubber processing industries are mainly located in SSI?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Steps taken to develop rubber industry in recent times are as follows —

(i) Conduct training programmes for entrepreneurs.

(ii) Development of rubber products conforming to national and international standards at the request of various industries.

(iii) Preparation of project reports, project profiles and technical bulletins.

(iv) Preparation of market survey reports.

(v) Testing of rubbers, rubber products and rubber-chemicals as per standards for various industries.

(vi) Development of rubber products for various industries for import substitution.

(vii) Conducting seminars, workshops, etc.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The current rate of the excise duty (cess) on rubber is Re. 0.50 per kg. and has been in effect from 24-8-1984. The cess on natural rubber is the main source of revenue to finance the various developmental activities of the Rubber Board.

As a result of the implementation of the Research and Development Schemes of the Rubber Board, the annual cess collection vis-a-vis the expenditure has been showing an adverse balance ever since 1981-82. The rate of growth of expenditure has also been higher than the growth in cess collection. In order to reduce the deficit and to find additional resources for intensifying the activities of the Rubber Board, the Government has proposed to enhance the ceiling rate of the cess from Re. 0.50 to Rs. 2.00 per kg.

(d) The market price of natural rubber at Kottayam market on 5-5-1992 was as follows:—

RMA-1V Trade Rs. 24.000 per MT

The price of natural rubber in Malaysian Market as on 5-5-1992 was as follows:—

RSS-3 grade—US $ 868.6 per MT SMR-20 grade—US $ 868.6 per MT

(e) The total production of natural rub ber in India and in other major rubber producing countries, estimated by the International Rubber Study Group, Lon don, for the year 1991, is as under:—

Country	('000 tonnes)
Thailand	1339
Indonesia	1301
Malasia	1200
India	360

(f) Most of the rubber processing industries, i.e. those converting crop from rubber plantations into marketable forms like sheet, scrap, crumb, centrifuged latex etc. are SSI units.

Saving as A Result of New Policies

1706. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state what is the estimated amount of expenditure likely to be saved during the current year as a result of the liberalisation of the industrial policy, new trade policy and other measures taken by various organisations like the office of the various organisations like the office of the Chief Controller of Imports.and Exports, State Trading Corporation, Minerals, and

Metals Trading Corporation and other allied trading bodies in the form of reduction in their huge structure ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : The savings in the form of structural changes as a result of policy reforms ate estimated to be Rs. 4.07 lakhs in the Ministry proper and Rs. 5.50 crores in the case of State Trading Corporation. Consequent to policy reforms a Committee has been set up in the Office of Chief Controller of Imports and Exports (DGIT) to go into the manpower requirement in the changed scenario. A special Terminal Compensation Scheme and Voluntary Retirement Scheme are being worked out for the Export Inspection Agencies.

Opening of Insurance Sector to Foreign Companies

1707. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased *to* state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have offered insurance related services to the foreign companies as part of its dialogue under the Uruguay round services negotiations; and

(b) if so, which are the areas in the insurance sector that will be open for foreign companies ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) An initial and conditional offer has been made to maintain the present regime in respect of marine cargo insurance and re-insurance and services auxiliary to insurance operations.

Facilities for Establishment of Joint Venture

1708. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what kind of facilities are being offered by Government for establishment of joint ventures abroad; and

(b) whether Government also allows the transfer of foreign exchange for establishment of such joint ventures ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Approvals for joint ventures abroad are accorded by an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC), which offers "Single Window Clearance" facility for such proposals Equity participation in joint ventures abroad through export of machinery, capitalistion of technical know how or managerial fees and royalty is encouraged. Transfer of foreign exchange by way of cash remittance is also allowed in deserving cases. Necessary powers have been delegated to the Reserve Bank of India for the release of foreign exchange for meeting preliminary expenses in connection with setting up overseas joint ventures.

National Plan for Promotion of Export

1709. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have formulated a new national plan for export promotion envisaging a 30 per cent increase in the value and volume of exports of 34 selected commodities ; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) Board of Trade in its meeting held on 13-12-91 had identified 34 items/commodites/areas which could receive concentrated attention in terms of incentive package for achieving a 30% growth in dollar terms. The items/ commodities approved for inclusion are as per list given in the statement (see below).

Apart from the said 34 items, two more items viz Handicrafts made of Brass and wood and Handknotted carpets have also been identified to be included in the Extreme Focus Plan.

Groups/ Sub-Groups, headed by Industry representatives have been set up to draw